

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TAGS: MARR, MILI, SOPN, TH

SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE: U.S. MILITARY REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND

1. FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION OF COMMENTS MADE
TO NEWMEN MARCH 16 BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

CHATCHAI: YESTERDAY, THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY
MR. EDWARD MASTERS, MR. BOEHM, AND ANOTHER OFFICIAL, CAME TO MEET
ME AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BECAUSE THERE ARE STILL
SEVERAL CONDITIONS IN OUR PROPOSAL TO THE UNITED STATES ON WHICH
FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS MUST STILL BE HELD. THIS IS BECAUSE THAILAND
CONSIDERS THAT ALL PRINCIPLES IN OUR PROPOSAL ARE PREREQUISITES
TO SAFEGUARD THAILAND'S INTERESTS. THEREFORE, IN NEGOTIATIONS
HELD OR IN AGREEMENT REACHED THE U.S. MUST EXTEND FULL
RECOGNITION TO AND RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THAILAND.
THE REPORT PUBLISHED IN SOME NEWSPAPERS THAT THE U.S. IS TAKING
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AN OBSTINATE OR FIRM STAND IS NOT TRUE. IT IS THAILAND, NOT

THE U.S., WHICH IS ADHERING FIRMLY TO ITS STAND. AND WE WILL CONTINUE ADHERING TO OUR STAND TO PREVENT ANY LOSS OF NATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR COUNTRY.

REPORTER: WHAT ARE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS ON WHICH AGREEMENT CANNOT BE REACHED YET...

CHATCHAI: IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO DISCLOSE WHAT THOSE MAJOR PROBLEMS ARE, BECAUSE WE ARE STILL AT THE STAGE OF HOLDING NEGOTIATIONS. THEREFORE, ANY DISCLOSURES MADE MIGHT HAVE REPRECUSIONS ON THE NEGOTIATIONS.

REPORTER: DO YOU HOPE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS...

CHATCHAI: I WISH TO INFORM YOU AND EMPHASIZE THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON AMERICAN BASES HAVE ENDED ALREADY. NEITHER DO NEGOTIATIONS FOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS, WHO WILL BE ADVISERS AND HELP TRAIN THAI OFFICIALS, TO REMAIN IN THAILAND CONCERN FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND AMERICA ARE EXCELLENT; THERE IS NOT A SINGLE CLOUD MARRING THEM AT ALL.

REPORTER: WHEN WILL A DATE BE FIXED FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BE HELD AGAIN?

CHATCHAI: THAT MUST BE UP TO THE AMERICAN SIDE, AND WHEN IT IS READY TO HOLD ANOTHER MEETING. I AM ALWAYS READY.

REPORTER: WILL IT BE AFTER MARCH 20?

CHATCHAI: NO. NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENT MUST BE REACHED BEFORE MARCH 20.

REPORTER: DID YOU SAY THAT THEY REFUSE FOR THEIR OFFICIALS TO BE UNDER THAI LAW?

CHATCHAI: THAT IS ONE OF THE MAIN PRINCIPLES. THEY MUST BE UNDER THAI LAW. ANYBODY WHO COMES AND STAYS IN OUR COUNTRY MUST CONFORM TO AND BE UNDER THAI LAW. THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT. I DON'T THINK THAT AMERICA WILL RAISE ANY OBJECTION TO THAT CONDITION, BECAUSE WHEN WE GO AND STAY IN AMERICA WE MUST CONFORM TO AND BE UNDER AMERICAN LAW.

REPORTER: DO YOU THINK THAT WHEN NEGOTIATIONS ARE HELD AGAIN THAT SATISFACTORY RESULTS WILL BE OBTAINED?

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CHATCHAI: IT DEPENDS ON BOTH SIDES, AND ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESPECTIVE SIDES. OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO PROTECT, THAT IS TO SAFEGUARD OUR SOVEREIGNTY IN FULL.

REPORTER: DOES THE AMERICAN SIDE HAVE TO REPORT RESULTS OF NEGOTIATIONS HELD WITH YOU YESTERDAY TO ITS GOVERNMENT FIRST BEFORE FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE HELD?

CHATCHAI: YES. IT MUST SEND A REPORT. WE MADE A PROPO-

SAL AND IT MADE A COUNTER-PROPOSAL. BOTH SIDES ARE ENDEAVORING TO REACH A COMPROMISE, TO THE UTMOST OF OUR ABILITY. BUT THESE NEGOTIATIONS MUST BE HELD ON A BASIS OF EQUALITY. WE MUST NOT SUFFER ANY LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY; WE MUST SAFEGUARD OUR SOVEREIGNTY IN FULL.

REPORTER: WHICH CONDITIONS ARE THERE ON WHICH AGREEMENT CANNOT BE REACHED YET?

CHATCHAI: EXCUSE ME, BUT I HAVE A VISITOR. HE IS AN IMPORTANT ADVISER ON SAUDI ARABIA'S OIL AFFAIRS AND THE DEAN OF A UNIVERSITY CONCERNED WITH OIL AND MINERALS.

REPORTER: SHOULD WE NOT BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. WILL WE SEND MEN TO GO AND SUPERVISE AND BE IN CHARGE OF EQUIPMENT, ETC.?

CHATCHAI: ER... THIS IS THE SITUATION. IF BY MARCH 20, THE U.S. IS NOT ABLE TO AGREE TO ALL OUR CONDITIONS, IT MUST COMPLETELY WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS.

REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT ITS EQUIPMENT? WILL IT LEAVE ITS EQUIPMENT THERE FOR US TO USE?

CHATCHAI: THAT DEPENDS, BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT IT IS LEAVING BEHIND. IT IS FAR TOO BIG AND COMPLICATED, AND IT IS OF NO USE FOR A VERY SMALL COUNTRY LIKE THAILAND.

REPORTER: WHAT ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS DID THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR MAKE TO US YESTERDAY?

CHATCHAI: NONE AT ALL. THE ONLY PROBLEM DISCUSSED WAS HOW AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED BY BOTH SIDES ON THE SEVEN CONDITIONS WE PROPOSED TO THE U.S.

REPORTER: WILL IT HAVE TO CONTACT AND ASK WASHINGTON
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FIRST?

CHATCHAI: OF COURSE. BUT IT IS VERY EASY FOR IT TO REPORT TO WASHINGTON, BECAUSE IT HAS AN EXCELLENT SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATIONS. I BELIEVE THAT RESULTS SHOULD BE KNOWN WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

REPORTER: HAS ANY COMMENT BEEN MADE THAT THE DEMANDS IN OUR PROPOSAL ARE FAR TOO HARSH?

CHATCHAI: THEY ARE NOT AT ALL HARSH. GOOD RELATIONS HAVE EXISTED BETWEEN THAILAND AND AMERICA FOR OVER 100 YEARS.

REPORTER: WHAT CAN BE THE REASON COMPELLING IT TO TAKE SUCH A LONG TIME FOR CONSIDERATION OF OUR PROPOSAL THIS TIME?

CHATCHAI: THAT CONCERNS ITS OFFICIALS. FURTHERMORE, ANY AGREEMENT MUST BE APPROVED BY CONGRESS ALSO, AND IT HAS TO

BE STUDIED AND APPROVED BY SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.
END TEXT
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